

THE CALIFORNIA STATE

senate

ON THE INTERNET

15/7/98 5:00

find legislative
information &
participate in
California's
lawmaking process

the California State Senate on the Internet

AT-A-GLANCE

SENATE WEBSITE www.sen.ca.gov
directs you to the following information:

- **SENATORS** – senators' home pages, addresses, leadership, committees, district maps
- **LEGISLATION** – search for bills, track legislation, find previous legislation information, search codes & statutes
- **COMMITTEES** – information on Senate standing, sub, select, special and joint committees
- **SCHEDULES** – current events, agendas of upcoming hearings, Floor session schedules, Legislative calendar, guide to legislative process, glossary of terms
- **AUDIO/TV** – live Senate hearings, Floor sessions, press conferences; video duplicates (dubs) available
- **FAQS/LINKS** – frequently asked questions (FAQs), links to other government and media websites and to selected search engines
- **OFFICES/CAUCUSES** – home pages for Senate offices, as well as caucuses

The proceedings of the California State Legislature may seem confusing to interested citizens who sometimes only have newspaper reports or 30-second television stories for information on the lawmaking process.

While the Legislature's meetings are open to the public and bill text and legislative analyses are widely available, it can still be difficult to get the information you need to participate effectively in the lawmaking process.

Today, computers make that information accessible. **On the Internet, there is a wealth of information about the lawmaking process, legislation, and your elected representatives.** It can also make it easier to communicate your views and concerns to your elected representative.

This brochure provides an overview of the legislative material available to the public over the Internet plus instructions on how to access that information.

Senators

WWW.SEN.CA.GOV

Information about each of the forty state senators is available from the Senate home page. On each senator's home page you will find:

- Capitol and district addresses and phone numbers
- map of the district
- member's biography
- legislation authored by that member
- committee membership(s)
- publication(s)
- district links (on selected sites)
- what's new (on selected sites)
- "post your opinion" or email option

Many senators use electronic communication to make it easier for their constituents to keep in touch with them. On most home pages, you will find a "post your opinion" or email option. You can share your views about state issues that are important to you.

Click on **SENATORS** to find information about your senator. If you don't know who your senator is, click on **YOUR SENATOR** to find out.

You can also find your senator by zip code at www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/sen/senplan/zip.htm

Committees

WWW.SEN.CA.GOV

Policy committee hearings are the forums for public input, the best place for citizens to communicate their concerns about proposed legislation. Bills are heard in **STANDING COMMITTEES**, which meet on a regular basis throughout the year. Some have **SUB-COMMITTEES** that focus in more depth on particular issues. **SELECT** and **SPECIAL COMMITTEES** study California policy issues and problems in order to develop longer range solutions. **JOINT COMMITTEES**, made up of members from both houses, consider issues of joint concern.

Click on **COMMITTEES** to find:

- Senate Committees
 - Standing
 - Sub
 - Select
 - Joint
 - Assembly
- membership
- staff, address & phone numbers
- meeting schedule(s)
- policy jurisdiction
- report(s) and publication(s)

How to Follow a Bill

WWW.SEN.CA.GOV

Before a bill becomes a law, it must be approved by the appropriate policy and fiscal committees in both the Senate and Assembly, and receive enough votes from the entire membership of both to pass. It is then sent to the Governor, who may veto the bill or sign it into law.

This process may take a year or more. During that time, there is ample opportunity for citizens to express their opinions and concerns and to influence legislation.

Click on **SCHEDULES** to follow this process:

- **TODAY'S SENATE EVENTS** – lists Senate sessions and/or committees meeting that day.
- **SENATE DAILY FILE** – tells you what bills are scheduled to be heard in committee or before the entire Senate that day.
- **LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR & DEADLINES** – gives you key legislative deadlines for the current two-year legislative session: the last day to introduce bills, when bills must move out of committee, the last day for the Governor to sign or veto bills, etc.
- **SENATE, ASSEMBLY & JOINT RULES** – provides procedural rules that govern the Senate and Assembly and the lawmaking process.
- **SENATE DAILY JOURNAL** – contains the proceedings of the Senate, including how senators voted.

Click on **LEGISLATIVE PROCESS** for:

- overview on how a bill becomes law
- glossary of Legislative terms

Click on **INFORMATION** for:

- additional information on the lawmaking process
- legislative codes and statutes
- California Constitution
- how to track bills

Legislation

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A tremendous amount of information about legislation is also available from the Senate website.

Click on **LEGISLATION** to search for bills by number or keyword. For each bill you will find:

- **BILL TEXT** – complete text of bills with annotations to identify material added or deleted due to amendments.
- **BILL HISTORY** – chronological listing of legislative activity for each bill (where the bill was heard, if amended, approved, etc.).
- **BILL STATUS** – current location of a bill and pending action.
- **BILL ANALYSES** – staff reports describing the history and impact of the legislation and arguments supporting and opposing the bill.
- **VOTES** – record of how members voted in committee and before the senate.
- **VETOES** – text of Governor's veto messages.

You can also track bills by subscribing to them. For every bill to which you subscribe, the bill information described above will be automatically emailed to you.

To subscribe, click on bill information. This can be accessed from **LEGISLATION** on the home page. Enter your search term. From the bill search results page, click on the bill you want to subscribe to. This will take you to a page that lists various parts of the bill. Click on **SUBSCRIBE**. To unsubscribe, follow the same procedure.

You can also check your list of subscribed bills. Click on **SUBSCRIPTION LIST** on the **BILL INFORMATION PAGE**. Type in and submit your email address. A list of your subscriptions will appear. You can also unsubscribe with this option.

Audio & TV

WWW.SEN.CA.GOV

You can watch and listen to the Senate live on television and the Internet

Click on [AUDIO/TV](#) to find out how you can listen to live Senate committee hearings and Senate Floor sessions over the Internet. If your local cable operator carries the California Channel, you can watch Legislative proceedings on television, Monday – Friday, from 9 AM to 3:45 PM.

There is a direct link to the California Channel from this site. The California Channel provides viewers with daily gavel-to-gavel coverage of state legislative proceedings. Click [TV CHANNELS](#) or go to www.calchannel.com/carriage to access coverage areas, schedules and other information. Click on [TV SCHEDULE](#) to view a list of programs covered during that week. Click on [WEBCAST](#) to select a program to view. A separate menu provides an archive of previously-aired programs.

The Senate Television Program keeps master tapes of Senate Floor sessions and committee hearings. Duplicate tapes (dubs) of events can be ordered. Click on [VIDEO DUBS](#) for ordering instructions.

Offices & Caucuses

WWW.SEN.CA.GOV

Other Senate and legislative information is available to the public from various Senate offices.

Click on [OFFICES/CAUCUSES](#) to find the following:

- SENATE OFFICE OF RESEARCH – develops public policy initiatives for the Senate; various reports are available.
- OFFICE OF SENATE FLOOR ANALYSES – provides nonpartisan analyses of legislation that comes to the Senate Floor for a vote by all 40 senators; information published by various caucuses and legislative summaries are available.
- SENATE DEMOGRAPHICS – maintains a state-of-the-art geographic information system database that includes legislative boundaries, schools, counties, highways, etc.
- SENATE PUBLICATIONS – maintains Senate Committee reports and studies by the Senate Office of Research as well as various brochures and pamphlets.
- SENATE FELLOWS PROGRAM – program co-sponsored with the Center for California Studies at California State University – Sacramento; information on how to apply.

There are numerous caucuses within the Legislature that consider issues of concern to specific groups. Click on [OFFICES/CAUCUSES](#) to read more about the:

- Senate Democratic Caucus
- Senate Republican Caucus
- Latino Legislative Caucus
- Legislative Black Caucus
- Legislative Internet Caucus
- Legislative Women's Caucus

Questions?

If you have questions that are not covered in this brochure, or if you discover any problems while using these instructions, please send an email to WEBMASTER@SEN.CA.GOV.

We try to respond to your questions as quickly as possible. You might also want to click on [FAQS/LINKS](#) for more assistance on email addresses, legislative information, terms, or how to find other information.



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